

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 AID-05 HEW-04 IO-13 AGRE-00
CIAE-00 COME-00 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 STR-04
TRSE-00 OES-06 /059 W
----- 120337 /21
R 140520Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4177

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DEPARTMENT PASS AGRICULTURE FOR FITZSIMMONDS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TBIO, SWEL, JA
SUBJECT: TOXICITY OF U.S.-ORIGIN INSECTICIDE

1. TOKYO-BASED REPORTER OF U.S. NEWSPAPER CALLED EMBASSY TO INQUIRE IF POST WAS AWARE THAT U.S. OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (OSHA) WAS CONTACTING JAPANESE COMPANIES BY PHONE FROM WASHINGTON TO DETERMINE IF THEY HAD OBSERVED ANY TOXIC EFFECTS ON HUMANS IN MANUFACTURE OR USE OF PESTICIDE CALLED PHOSVEL (IN JAPAN). EMBOFFS PLEADED IGNORANCE OF MATTER.

2. REPORTER GAVE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL INFO, APPARENTLY UNCOVERED AS PART OF INVESTIGATION HE IS DOING FOR NEWS STORY. PHOSVEL IS JAPANESE TRADE NAME FOR INSECTICIDE CALLED LEPTOPHOS IN U.S. LATTER IS MANUFACTURED IN U.S. BY VELSICOL PACIFIC FOR EXPORT TO OTHER COUNTRIES; IT IS NOT REGISTERED FOR USE IN U.S. IT IS MANUFACTURED UNDER VALSICOL LICENSE IN JAPAN BY NIPPON CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES CO., WHICH SELLS PRODUCT TO THREE DISTRIBUTORS. FAO/WHO HAVE ESTABLISHED TOLERANCE IN HUMANS OF 0.001 MG/KG BODY WEIGHT; JAPANESE ARE USING INFORMAL STANDARD OF 0.007 MG/KG. INSECTICIDE IS USED FOR PREHARVEST TREATMENT OF RICE AND APPLES. OSHA IS SAID TO BE DOING INVESTIGATION AS RESULT OF FINDING THAT INSECTICIDE IS HIGHLY NEUROTOXIC TO HUMANS (AS OBSERVED IN MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS, NOT IN FIELD USE). REPORTER ALSO MENTIONED THAT CHEMICAL IS SOLD
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IN 25 FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND THAT 2000 WATER BUFFALO HAD BEEN

KILLED IN EGYPT BY EXPOSURE TO IT.

3. REPORTER IS CALLING AROUND TOKYO TO VARIOUS MINISTRIES AND PRIVATE COMPANIES, TRYING TO UNCOVER (A) WHETHER JAPANESE ARE AWARE OF NEUROTOXIC EFFECTS, (B) WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTROLLING MANUFACTURE AND USE, (C) WHAT CONSTRAINTS EXIST ON SUCH OPERATIONS, (D) HOW MANY PEOPLE, IF ANY, HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY CHEMICAL. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT AS RESULT OF REPORTER'S INQUIRIES AND OSHA PHONE CALLS (IF THEY INDEED HAVE OCCURRED), NEWS STORY WILL BREAK SOON IN U.S. AND JAPANESE PAPERS. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING APPROPRIATE BACKGROUND TO RESPOND TO INQUIRIES, IF NECESSARY. CONSIDERING DELICATE STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOJ ON CITRUS FUNGICIDES, WE HOPE THAT ANOTHER PESTICIDE ISSUE IS NOT IN OFFING TO DISTRACT THOSE INVOLVED IN APPROVING AND REGULATING SUCH SUBSTANCES.
HODGSON

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Message Attributes

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